



Campaign Updates

Updates 2009
Updates 2008
Updates 2007
Updates 2006
Updates 2005
Updates 2004
Updates 2003
Updates 2002

Sweatfree in the News

Media Releases

Sweatshop News

Newsletter

Statements

Events

National Summit 2010
Speaking Tour 2010
National Summit 2009
Speaking Tour 2009
National Summit 2008
Speaking Tour 2008
Conf. Report 2007
Conf. Report 2006
Conf. Report 2005
Youth Conf. 2005

December 2005

Newsletter #6

Contents:

- 1) World Trade Organization Ministerial in Hong Kong
- 2) Meeting with Chinese Working Women Network
- 3) Local Campaign Updates
- 4) Volunteers Needed
- 5) Building Support for Just Garments
- 6) SweatFree Communities Needs Your Support
- 7) Thank you!

World Trade Organization Ministerial in Hong Kong

SweatFree Communities participated in protests and labor rights conferences, and met with many worker advocacy organizations last week in Hong Kong during the week of the 6th WTO ministerial meeting. The globalization of solidarity between labor rights organizations as demonstrated in the streets and at the meetings gave us hope.

Inside the Ministerial, national delegates negotiated on market access in agriculture and services, while trying to protect their domestic industries. Rich countries promised poor countries a development package, which has been critiqued by many human rights organizations. One good thing that came out the week is that a coalition of 90 developing countries successfully rejected a proposal requiring governments to open up their procurement of services to transnational corporations under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Still, the WTO declared that members "should engage in more focused discussions" on government procurement as many corporations are looking to access government markets. SweatFree Communities will monitor the progress of these negotiations because a deal on government procurement in GATS would impact every level of government - federal, state, county, and city - and establish lower thresholds than the ones in other government procurement agreements currently in effect.

For more information on trade and the recent WTO ministerial, [visit our series of links](#). We have also updated [our list of labor rights organizations](#) to include many of the organizations represented in Hong Kong.

Meeting with Chinese Working Women Network

During the week of the WTO ministerial in Hong Kong, over a dozen activists from the United States and Canada participated in a phone conference with Jenny Chan of the Chinese Working Women Network (CWWN). Jenny spoke about the harsh conditions that young women migrant workers face in China. CWWN's organizing work focuses on labor law education, feminist rights, occupational safety and health, and long-term rural re-integration. They run worker centers that provide



cultural and educational workshops and help migrant women form dormitory support networks for the improvement of working and living conditions. You can learn more about CWWN at www.cwwn.org; the "archive" section provides research papers on these issues. You can contact us for research papers and notes from this meeting.

Local Campaign Updates

Maine: Thanks to strong grassroots pressure and testimony from worker rights groups in Central America, Hong Kong, and Haiti, the State Division of Purchases has accepted all requests from the Maine Clean Clothes Alliance to strengthen the enforcement of the sweatfree procurement law of 2001. The Division is submitting "An Act To Strengthen the State Purchasing Code of Conduct Law" for the 2006 legislative session. The Act authorizes the Purchasing Agent to employ an independent monitor – defined as a not-for-profit organization neither funded nor controlled by the industry being monitored - - to investigate worker rights violations. The Act also provides for stronger sanctions of non-compliant companies and establishes a working group to investigate the creation and use of an independent consortium to monitor and investigate worker rights violations.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Joining the City and School District, which also have adopted sweatfree procurement policies, the Milwaukee County Board voted unanimously this week to adopt a sweatfree purchasing ordinance. This is another triumph for the Milwaukee Clean Clothes Campaign, which also recently opened a downtown fair trade store. Is there a cleaner city in the United States? [Read the ordinance.](#)

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania:

Pittsburgh is facing a merger of city and county purchasing departments. To insure that the city's sweatfree procurement policy isn't overridden by the county's lack of a policy, Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance is pressuring the county to adopt the city's sweatfree procurement rules. [See their letter to the county council.](#)

[Insert your campaign here! Please be in touch with us with the latest news from your campaign.]

Volunteers Needed

The next step after passing a sweatfree policy is enforcement. To do that, we need to know who the major public contractors and suppliers are and where the products are made. In January we will start compiling public procurement data and factory information into a database that will be accessible online. We need lots of volunteers for data entry! You can help with this project from any location as long as you have computer access. Please contact us if you are able to help.

Building Support for Just Garments

In January, Kathryn Sharpe, volunteer with the Resource Center of the Americas and SweatFree Communities, will visit the Just Garments factory in El Salvador. Just Garments needs people who can act as "point people" to advocate for the company in the United States. Kathryn's goal for the trip is to deepen her understanding of the history and current situation of Just Garments, as well as to build connections with workers and figure out how we can be the best possible allies.

Upon return, Kathryn plans to develop promotional materials and build a network of Just Garments advocates. These people would educate and mobilize people in their local area to support the factory workers as they transition to independent production. Just Garments has had a challenging journey, and they also are a source of great hope. If you are interested to be part of this initiative, please contact kathrynsharp19@yahoo.com.

SweatFree Communities Needs Your Support

Sweatfree communities are a real positive alternative to the global sweatshop economy, and many of you are working hard on local campaigns to make sure all workers are treated with respect and dignity. SweatFree Communities would like to support and coordinate even more sweatfree campaigns. But we need your support. Please give to SweatFree Communities this holiday season. [Click here to donate](#). Thank you to all who have already donated.

Thank you!

SweatFree Communities is deeply grateful to the following foundations that have supported our work this year: The Arca Foundation, the Haymarket People's Fund, the General Service Foundation, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, the Qwest Foundation, the Unitarian Universalist Funding Program, and the Woodbury Fund. We would also like to acknowledge all the organizations and individuals who have supported SweatFree Communities financially, in-kind, and through many, many hours of dedicated volunteer work. This organization could not function without you. A special thanks to SweatFree Communities [board members](#)!